

As an American citizen, an independent filmmaker, and a Professor of Mass Communications at the University of Wisconsin-Superior, I beg you to stop the culturally destructive homogenization of American mass media through corporate consolidation. In any study of world politics during the industrial age, one of the primary differences between democratic systems and authoritarian systems of government has to do with the diversity of voices in mass media. To allow further consolidation of our public airwaves poses a direct threat to our democratic way of life and the diversity of our national discourse. One has only to look at Clear Channel's recent mandates to its stations to see the clear and present danger to democracy posed by media conglomeration. Equally disturbing is the daily compromise of the journalistic principle of objectivity by News Corporation's many media outlets concerning the debate over the war in Iraq. Though I respect the constitutional right of Clear Channel and News Corp. to decide what messages they select to set forth, with fewer and fewer alternatives in the marketplace, the ability of alternative points of view to be heard are minimized. Regardless of one's personal views of the war, the great founders of this country envisioned a very different role for mass media in America. To say that many of the rules concerning mass media are "out of date" (the common argument by most media companies in their desire for further deregulation), suggests that the great principles of the First Amendment are "dated" as well. As stated in your 1934 charter, you govern mass media in the "public's best interest." I beg you to embrace this all important responsibility and do what is in the best interest of the American public and not the self-serving interests of the media giants who already control so much of the airwaves and printing presses of our democracy. Our public interest is first and foremost to have the freedom to select from diverse media points of view; a freedom which you can either choose to emphasize or compromise. Thank you for consideration.